

VA Medical Center, Aspinwall Division,  
Attendants' Quarters (Building No. 6)  
5103 Delafield Avenue  
Aspinwall Vicinity  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5438-F

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

VA MEDICAL CENTER,  
ASPINWALL DIVISION, ATTENDANTS' QUARTERS  
(Building No. 6)

HABS No. PA-5438-F

**Location:** The Attendants' Quarters are located in the northeast quadrant of the hospital complex, on the north side of an axial road leading southeast from the end of the main entry drive, approximately 220 feet from the end of the drive. The Medical Center is located at 5103 Delafield Avenue, Aspinwall vicinity, O'Hara Township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Pittsburgh East Quadrangle. Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 17.594100.4483140

**Present Owner:** United States Veterans Administration

**Present Occupant:** United States Veterans Administration

**Present Use:** Veterans Hospital

**Significance:** The Attendants' Quarters is one of the original structures erected by the United States Veterans' Bureau at Aspinwall in 1924. The building originally housed the attendants who worked at the Hospital facility. The Attendants' Quarters is significant for its associations with the Veterans Bureau's efforts to expand their medical facilities during the 1920s and is representative of the earliest period of construction at the Aspinwall site.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1924
2. Architect/Engineer: United States Veterans' Bureau.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Veterans Administration.
4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: United States Veterans' Bureau.
6. Alterations and additions: The Attendants' Quarters has undergone a number of alterations over time. These include replacement of the original slate roof with asbestos shingles, removal of wood balustrades from the roofs of the end porches, and a 1938 remodeling by the Public Works Administration that converted the first and second floors to office space. During this renovation the first floor corridor connecting the former male and female quarters was opened, allowing passage between the two areas.

- B. Historical Context: The Attendants' Quarters were erected in 1924 as part of the initial building program undertaken by the Veterans' Bureau at the Aspinwall site. The building conforms to the dictates of the "architectural set" developed by the Veterans' Bureau in the early 1920s and which assured that buildings serving similar purposes at various Veterans' Bureau facilities shared standardized floor plans.

The Attendants' Quarters originally provided living space for male and female attendants assigned to nurse and care for the hospital's tubercular patients. The male and female quarters within the building were separated by partitions, preventing direct communication between the two portions of the building.

In 1938 the building was remodeled and converted into office space. It remained in this use until it was recently vacated.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Georgian Revival.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Two-story rectangular-plan building measuring approximately 131 feet by 38 feet. Single story porches, each measuring approximately 10 feet by 28 feet project from the northwest and southeast facades. Slightly projecting gabled pavilion centered on southwest, front, facade.
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: Structural tile walls with exterior brick veneer.
4. Structural systems, framing: One-way concrete slab construction including columns, beams and flooring.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Single story entry porches located at northwest and southeast facades measuring approximately 10 feet by 28 feet. Porches are slightly raised on concrete bases. Roofs supported by paired square wood columns. A simple wood balustrade spans the spaces between the columns.

The principal entry on the southwest facade sits atop a small concrete stoop. Above the door is an ornamental wrought iron balcony.

6. Chimneys: None.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The principal entrance on the southwest facade consists of a nine-light four-panel wood door surrounded by sidelights and a topped by a four-light transom. The doorway is framed by fluted Doric pilasters supporting a plain architrave and a decorative wrought iron balcony. The side entrances have nine-light two-panel wood doors with four-light transom sash above.
- b. Windows and shutters: Windows are rectangular, with concrete sills and brick soldier course lintels. Sash are six-over-six double-hung wood units. The central pavilion and end bays have eight-over-eight double-hung wood sash.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Asbestos-shingled hipped roof with cross gable centered on southwest facade.

- b. Cornice, eaves: Simple wood box cornice.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: Unexcavated except for a 40-foot section at the northwest end of the building.
- b. First floor: Double-loaded corridor with dormitory type rooms. Central stairwell.
- c. Second floor: Double-loaded corridor with dormitory type rooms. Central stairwell.

2. Stairways: Steel and concrete stairs with wrought iron balusters and wood handrails.

3. Flooring: Concrete flooring with linoleum tile covering.

4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Painted plaster walls with suspended plaster ceilings.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Steel frames with wood doors and operable single light transoms.
- b. Windows: Simple wood moldings and sills.

6. Decorative features and trim: No significant decorative features exist other than those addressed previously.

7. Hardware: Brass and aluminum.

8. Mechanical equipment: Remnants of glass incandescent lighting fixtures and steam radiators exist throughout.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The principal facade faces southwest and fronts directly onto an asphalt roadway leading to the facility's service buildings.

2. Historic landscape design: The building was placed within the 1924 landscape design, which created a campus-like setting of buildings, lawns, and tree-lined walks and roads. The building is sited very close to a roadway, with minimal shrubbery against the principal, southwest, facade. Lawns sloping away from the building's side and rear facades.
3. Outbuildings: None.

### Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Located at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- B. Early Views: Located at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- C. Interviews: Personnel, United States Veterans Administration Medical Center, Aspinwall Division, O'Hara Township, Pennsylvania.
- D. Bibliography:
  1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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*The Nation Builds For Those Who Served: An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of the Veterans Administration* (Washington: The Veterans Administration and The National Building Museum, 1980).

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2. Secondary and published sources:

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*Federal Architect*, 7 (January 1937): 37, 43.

*Federal Architect*, 12 (July 1943): 12-13.

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Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was undertaken in July 1989 in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the United States Veterans Administration, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative measure prior to the demolition of the subject buildings at the Aspinwall Division Medical Center.

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September 1989



Deafield Avenue

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